

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the examiner allowed claims 4-23, which is appreciatively acknowledged. The examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 24-27 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by the Roye reference. The rejection is traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The examiner contends that column 2, line 41 to column 3, line 39 of the Roye reference discloses:

“...an arrangement for forming a digital representation of an image in which slices (“objects”) are grabbed, trivial gaps (“noise images”) are separated from significant information (“essential images”), the significant information is marked for retention while the trivial gaps are discarded, and a reduced noise version of the image is reconstructed containing only the former”.

The applicants previously argued that the examiner is erroneously using the words “objects” and “slice” synonymously, that an “object” is a collection of connected “slices”, and that an “object” is a connected collection of those. The applicants also previously argued that the invention of claims 1-3 and 24-27 operates to find multiple objects, each containing multiple slices wherein the multiple objects then each are examined (in context with other objects around them) to determine which objects constitute noise and which objects constitute data and the objects which constitute noise are eliminated.

In the present Office Action, the examiner notes that the previously argued distinction between the “slices” of the Roye reference and the “objects” of claims 1-3 and 24-27 are not recited in the rejected claims. The examiner indicates that these claims do not indicate any characteristic of the recited “objects” which precludes the examiner’s reading of each “slice” in the Roye reference as a separate “object”, and that the applicant’s alleged distinction therefore is not applicable to these claims.

However, each of the rejected claims has now been amended to recite that the object grabbing operation is performed on slices included in runlength data of the digital representation to identify adjoining pixels which form objects. (Support for this use of the term “slices” appears on page 18, lines 6-8 of the specification.) It is respectfully submitted that this language now clarifies that there is a substantial difference between “slices” and “objects”.

Furthermore, the applicants note that the Roye reference (which is incorporated by reference into the present application) clearly indicates that there is a substantial difference between “slices” and “objects” and that the two terms as used in the Roye reference do not have overlapping meanings. For example, see column 5, line 53-66 of the Roye patent. In the Roye patent, a “slice” represents a dark string of connected horizontal pixels, with no gaps therebetween, of the scanned raw runlength data, and slices are assembled into an “object” which is a body of connected dark pixels completely surrounded by white or transparent pixels. The meanings of the terms “slice” and “object” are the same in the present application as in the Roye patent.

With the above meanings of the terms "slice" and "object" in mind, it is respectfully noted that the "trivial gaps" which the examiner refers to as "noise images" actually refer to absence of dark pixels between adjacent slices in a string of runlength data and therefore cannot constitute any kind of image or noise image. The examiner indicates that the Roye reference discloses that the trivial gaps which are analogous to "noise images" are discarded, or as what Roye actually teaches is that the trivial gaps are filled with dark pixels. It is respectfully submitted that the examiner's incorrect statements resulted from not getting the proper meanings indicated in the Roye patent and the present application to the terms "slice" and "object".

Is respectfully submitted that if the examiner uses the terms "slice" and "object" with the meanings clearly indicated in the Roye patent and the present application, then claims 1-3 and 24-27, especially as now amended, clearly are not anticipated by the Roye patent.

In view of the above arguments and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance. Entry of this amendment is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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